

Clerical Leadership and Political Management in Africa in the 21st Century: The Case of Nigeria

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Abstract: *The return of the military to active participation in the leadership of some countries across Africa is disturbing on the one hand, but on the other hand, it is indicative of the fact that Africa is in serious leadership crisis. As a result of leadership crises in Africa many countries are underdeveloped and also considered as failed states. Nigeria's situation seems most pathetic. As such, Africa in general and Nigeria in particular is in need and search of a leadership paradigm that will bring about economic and social development. In this article, the concept "Pastoral Leadership" is explored and projected as the needed leadership paradigm in 21st century Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. The article adopted qualitative research method based on content analysis. It argues that since good leadership is necessary for economic growth, infrastructural development and peaceful co - existence based on requirements of justice and equity; and, since various leadership paradigms adopted in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular since the attainment of independence in the 1960s seem not to be working, pastoral leadership modeled on shepherding imagery as found in both Islamic tradition and Christian scripture is recommended for some Africa in general and Nigeria's current democratic dispensation in particular.*

Keywords: Pastoral Leadership, Leadership Crisis, Military Participation and Economic Development

1. Introduction

Leadership is the art of guiding a team or organisation through effective decision - making, setting a vision, motivating members, and achieving collective goals. The office or position of a leader whose role and function consists in leading, guiding, conducting, commanding with a view to providing a sense of direction and purpose, especially to organisations in view of attaining organizational goals is usually been exhibited by various living collectivities in general. For example, forms of leadership and the exercise of their roles are noticeable among ants, honey bees and herd of elephants which take place through instinct, by programming behavior and by functional specialisation.

Among human beings however, very sophisticated and complex forms of leadership as well as leadership roles and functions that are far beyond instinct and natural inborn qualities are often displayed and noticed at both micro and macro levels. For this, Emean Innocent Izuchukwu in *Democracy and Leadership in Nigeria: Towards National Integration*, remarked that: "Leadership is at the core of every human endeavour. It is a strong index and even coordinates other indices in relation to development. The type of leadership determines if ideals of democracy in a democratic state will or will not be respected" (Web accessed 10/4/2023). Many people would agree with Izuchukwu's position on the place of leadership in every human endeavour. In this vein, Kazeem O. Dauda in *Islamic Leadership Paradigms: Universal Remedy to Bad Leadership and Sustainable Democratic Dispensation in Nigeria*, writes: "Leadership plays a key role in the successful nurturing of the democratic system to maturity. Visionary and committed leadership are the principal elements that will ensure that the system serves as a veritable vehicle for the attainment of the socio - economic aspirations of the citizens, good governance and in ensuring sustainable democracy" (web accessed 10/4/2023). Indeed, leadership plays a central role in the success and direction of businesses. Success of organisations depends on

good leaders to communicate the organisation's mission, vision and goals with a view to achieving them.

Contextual Background: Africa in need of Leadership Paradigm

One of the major problems bedeviling many African countries in their cultural (socio political, economic, infrastructural etc..) development is the problem of bad leadership. This problem predates the colonial administration in the late 19th and 20th centuries. The attainment of independence from colonial powers and the ushering in of Africans as leaders and at the helm of affairs, "gave rise to great hopes with regard to the political, economic, social and cultural development of the African peoples" (John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa* no.39). Despite having new African leaders and the hopes their coming generated, John Paul II further observed: "One common situation without any doubt, is that Africa is full of problems. In almost all our nations, there is abject poverty, tragic mismanagement of available scarce resources, political instability and social disorientation" (no.42). All of these problems could be associated with bad leadership. In other words, the reality of these problems in Africa is evidence of bad leadership.

Recently, the military have made a come back in the political governance of their countries.

In *Africa the 7 Military Coups over the last three years*, it is noted that: On July 26, 2023, the military announced that it had overthrown President Mohamed Bazoum of Niger Republic, hoisting General Abdourahamane Tiani as the new strongman of the country. In Burkina Faso, President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré was ousted from power by the military with Lieutenant Colonel Paul - Henri Sandaogo Damiba inaugurated as president. On September 30, Damiba himself was dismissed by the military and was replaced by Captain Ibrahim Traore. The military in Sudan chased out and replaced the transitional Civilian leaders on October 25, 2021. In Guinea, President Alpha Conde was overthrown by the military on September 5, 2021. Colonel Mamady Doumbouya

became leader. On August 18, 2020, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita of Mali was overthrown by the military and a transitional government was formed in October, which was later ousted on May 24, 2021. Colonel Assimi Goita took up leadership role (accessed 27/1/2024).

All of these incidents of military come back in politics though worrisome, could only be indicative of one thing, bad leadership. Nicholas Westcott in *Why have coups returned to Africa, and what can be done about it?* advanced numerous reasons for the return of the military. Among these reasons is leadership problem. "The current spate of coups in Africa has many causes, often specific to each individual country: bad governance, lack of accountability, lack of legitimacy, corruption, pervasive insecurity, insurrection challenges, personal ambition, foreign meddling, ... (Web accessed 30/1/2024).

Take the case of Nigeria for instance, though with no record of military come back, "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely of failure of leadership...The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example, which is the hallmark of true leadership" (Izuchukwu accessed 10/4/2023). Speaking further on bad leadership in Nigeria, Ebegbulem, cited in Kazeem states that: "The plethora of leaders that have bestrode the country's political landscape, are selfish, mediocre, tribal and opportunistic small money-minded people masquerading as leaders have continued to regenerate over time. From Tafawa Balewa administration to Goodluck Jonathan administration, leadership crisis in the country remains the same and this have seriously impacted negatively on socio-economic and political development in Nigeria" (Kazeem accessed 10/4/2023).

Nigeria's leadership crisis has a long history beginning from her independence days. Nigeria is one of the largest world's developing nations and most populous country in Africa. It comprises over four hundred languages and a multiplicity of cultural and religious diversity (Kazeem). Nigeria also has great natural resources. Prior to its independence at the time the constitution was being developed and was entering the final stage the emphasis was on good self-governance that was capable of managing her numerous natural resources as well as human cultural and religious diversity for developmental heights. This was captured in Tafawa Balewa Independence Day broadcast thus: "We the elected representatives of the people of Nigeria, concentrated on proving that we were fully capable of managing our own affairs both internally and as a nation" (Nigeria at 50, 74). Managing our affairs both internally and as a nation in this context would mean providing leadership that works for the unity of citizenry, guarantees security, infrastructural development, justice and peace. These are values that evaded Nigeria since independence because of numerous factors including principally but not limited to bad leadership. Coupled with bad leadership is the rivalry among the various ethnic and religious groups in the country, as well as in educational and economic differences between the South and the North which creates further pressure (Nigeria at 50, 76). The *Lineamenta* of the first National Pastoral Congress of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria also observed that:

Independence did not reduce these conflicts. Ethnicity and religion, the basis of identity and action, have been exploited and turned into the monster that prevents the construction of one nation based on democratic principles. Socio-political institutions that should ensure progress and fair play, in justice and peace, as should be the case in all democratic and multi-ethnic nation states, are plagued by ethnicity and religion" (13 - 14).

Nigeria is indeed heavily divided along ethnic lines and between two great religions, Christianity and Islam. Suspicion between the adherents of these religions in which one feels the position and actions of the one can outsmart the other regarding proselytisation across the country could be one of the reasons for which having credible leaders in Nigeria is a mirage.

Religious divide plays a crucial role in electioneering processes and their outcome which should facilitate and midwife having credible leaders. It influences the choice of those who should vie for political offices. When it comes to getting people to occupy leadership positions, Nigerians in most cases do not seek credible persons based on capability and merit but tend to seek those who will represent their ethnic and religious divide. "Ethnicity and religion, the basis of identity and action, have been exploited and turned into the monster that prevents the construction of one nation based on democratic principles. Socio-political institutions that should ensure progress and fair play, in justice and peace, as should be the case in all democratic and multi-ethnic nation states, are plagued by ethnicity and religion" (Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, *Lineamenta*, 13 - 14). Recall the controversy surrounding Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket of the 2023 elections where many Christians in Nigeria believed it was targeted against them in view of proselitisation. Even if president Tinubu could have opted for the Muslim-Muslim ticket in view of large population of the Muslim electorate across the country, Christians did not see it from that limelight. Commenting on the issue of Muslim-Muslim ticket, Jibrin Ibrahim (Web accessed 18/11/2023) in *The Muslim-Muslim ticket and religious mobilisation in Nigeria* states that: "What is new in Nigeria today is the climate of suspicion and fear over what many Christians see as an Islamisation agenda... It might well be that these choices were activated by the strategic search for winning combinations but for many within the Christian community, the strategies adapted might also have religious connotations". This is not good for Nigeria's young democracy and could indeed be one of the reasons for our failure in having good and credible leaders. As such, persons elected into political leadership positions and those who might have stolen the people's votes and mandate and purport that they were duly elected end up lording it over the people for whom of course they were neither dedicated to nor have love for them.

After it attained independence, Nigeria was under civilian leadership until 1966. From 1966, leadership in Nigeria was characterised by military takeovers and dictatorship until civilian leadership was reestablished in 1999. The military that was involved in leadership did not help matters because they encouraged division based on ethnicity and religion. "The Military have become ethnically and religiously

politicized and have carried this polarization into the judiciary. Years of military dictatorship have torn us apart and revealed the worst in ethnic and religious relations” (Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, Lineamenta, 14).

Even with the return of democracy in 1999, over the past two decades, most Nigerians have completely given up on the leadership of the political class. This is because basic security had disappeared across the country. Highways and train transportation are not safe. Public places such as mosques and churches for religious worship, market squares, shop malls, even private houses are not safe. Violence came from numerous directions including Boko Haram, ISWAP, Bandits, Unknown gunmen, and, armed herdsmen. The violence from armed herders and bandits has grown in the last couple of years with complete impunity from the political leadership. The utter lawlessness across the country especially throughout large parts of Northern Nigeria had left so many people unprotected. To most Nigerians, it appears that the political ruling class either do not care or are incapable of addressing the situation or still, are part of the problem (Martin Igwe Uzoukwu, 407 - 418).

Nigeria has therefore been so unfortunate not to have gotten competent, effective and purposeful leaders capable of turning her highly great human and natural potentials into real economic and political powers. It is confronted with challenges of bad leadership and poor governance which serve as impediment to her quest for sustainable democracy and has now clogged on its wheel of striving for development. Nigeria’s perennial economic recession and developmental backwardness for example, could be largely attributed and credited to bad successive leadership from when it gained independence in 1960 to the immediate past PDP and present APC - led administrations. Unless and until something is done, and done fast about bad leadership, Nigeria, already heading towards catastrophe of dearth of socio - economic and political development as well as democratic recession, could finally capitulate in national disintegration (Kazeem, accessed 10/4/2023).

As such, it is against this contextual background setting that this article titled: Pastoral Leadership a Paradigm for Political Administration in 21st Century Africa: The Nigerian Situation, is anchored. The article examines the nature of pastoral leadership in general and how it can be applied as a theory or paradigm or category and form of leadership needed in the twenty - first century political administration in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Various are the theories and paradigms or styles of leadership employed across nations and organisations. Kendra Cherry in *The Major Leadership Theories* posits that “as interest in the psychology of leadership increased over the last 100 years, a number of different leadership theories have been introduced to explain exactly how and why certain people become great leaders”. Among such theories are Great man theories, Trait theories, Contingency theories, Situational Theories, Behavioural theories, participative theories, Management theories, Relational theories (Web accessed 29/1/2024), and, many others.

Pastoral Leadership Paradigm

Pastoral leadership is one of such theories or paradigms or categories of leadership. From the Christian perspective, pastoral leadership is the type of leadership associated with Christian religion churches and their congregations. James Mallon in *Divine Renovation from a Maintenance to a Mission Parish* observes that in the Roman Catholic Church, it is hierarchical in nature. “This means that by office, bishops are the leaders of their dioceses, and priests, in union with their bishops, are leaders of their parishes” (260). Among most non - Catholic Church congregations however, pastoral leadership involves the entire congregations. Such leadership at some time focused on nurturing the different roles and responsibilities of church members in various functions on committees and boards. At a later stage however, this has shifted from enabling membership in various leadership roles, to leadership being the primary responsibility of the pastor (Roland Kuhl, accessed 6/12/2023).

For Dave Early, a pastor who loves pasturing and has served as collegiate campus pastor, church planter and, a mega church pastor, and, as a professor, also trains pastors, in *Pastoral leadership is...*, concurs that pastoral leadership is found among Christian congregations. For him, this type of leadership centers on the biblical pastoral mandates which encompasses many things (ix). These include being a man of God, it is praying with power, and, it is also about teaching the Word of God. Early further insists that pastoral leadership is also about equipping and leading others as well as about shepherding God’s flock.

Early’s submission could have been a reaction to the observation among some pastoral theologians who lament the use of secular theories instead of biblical and theological ones in pastoral leadership. In this regard, Kuhl observes further that pastoral leadership today is in crisis. Citing Eugene Peterson, Kuhl describes the crises thus:

The pastors of America have metamorphosed into a company of shopkeepers, and the shops they keep are churches. They are preoccupied with shopkeeper’s concerns – how to keep the customers happy, how to lure the customers away from the congregation down the street, how to package the goods so that the customers will lay out more money.

Some of them are very good shopkeepers. They attract a lot of customers, pull in great sums of money, develop splendid reputations. Yet it is still shopkeeping; religious shopkeeping, to be sure but shopkeeping all the same. The marketing strategies of the fast - food franchise occupy the working minds of these entrepreneurs; while asleep they dream of the kind of success that will get the attention of journalists (accessed 7/12/2023).

For Kuhl, the reason for the crisis rests on the fact that pastoral leadership today is modeled according to psychological and sociological theories rather than biblical and theological ones. It appears that on the topic of leadership, we Christians have kept pace with those in business and secular fields (accessed 7/12/2023).

Pastoral leadership based on theological theories and principles takes its bearing from the biblical shepherding

imagery. Shepherds in biblical lands in general and Israel in particular were different from shepherds in other parts of the world. They had different ways of shepherding. Principally, the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep in Israel for example, is such that the shepherd knows each sheep by the name he gives each because of many years of being together (William Barclay, 56).

The topography of the land of Israel makes shepherding an imperative. The ground for most part was rough and stony. This type of pasture available in biblical lands imposes upon the shepherd the necessity of a nomadic life. The shepherd must travel with his flock from one pasture to another as the seasons change (John L. McKenzie SJ, 802 - 804) with wild animals lurking from all directions for a prey. It is for this topography and ecosystem that Barclay in *the Daily Study Bible* observed that:

His life was very hard. No flock ever grazed without a shepherd, and he was never off duty. There being little grass, the sheep were bound to wonder, and since there were no protecting walls, the sheep had constantly to be watched. On either side of the narrow plateau the ground dipped sharply down to the craggy deserts and the sheep were always liable to stray away and get lost (53).

For the sheep to find grass even where there appears to be little, and the need to be watered; they must be led to both pasture and water.

The sheep also trust and depend on the shepherd for their security in all ramifications. The shepherd leads the flock to shelter in harsh weather and defends them against beast of prey and bandits. "The shepherd's task was not only constant but dangerous, for, in addition, he had to guard the flock against wild animals, especially against wolves, and there were always thieves and robbers ready to steal the sheep" (Barclay 53). A shepherd is a strong person who is capable of defending his flock against wild beasts (1Sam.17: 34 - 37; cf. Matthew 10: 16, Acts 20: 29). The shepherd of Israel is also gentle with his flock, knowing their condition (Proverbs 27: 23), adapting himself to their needs (Genesis 33: 13ff), bearing them in his arms (Isaiah 40: 11), cherishing each and every one of them as his daughter (2 Samuel 12: 3).

His authority is never disputed by the sheep; because it is based on his devotion and love for the sheep and, as such, "it is strictly true that the sheep know and understand the... shepherd's voice; and that they will never answer to the voice of a stranger" (Barclay 56). His unalloyed devotion and love to the sheep can stretch to any length even to the point of having his life at risk. Barclay recounted what Adam George Smith wrote about this unalloyed love and devotion of the shepherd of Israel to his sheep thus: "On some high moor, across which at night the hyaenas howl, when you meet him, sleepless, farsighted, weather - beaten, leaning on his staff, and looking out over his scattered sheep, every one of them on his heart" (Barclay 53). At the peak of their quarrel, Jacob also recounted his experience of the hard and sacrificial life style of the shepherd to Laban thus:

"In the twenty years that I was under you, no ewe or she - goat of yours miscarried, and I have never eaten rams of your

flock. I never brought you an animal torn by the wild beasts, I made good the loss myself. You held me responsible for anything stolen by day or night. Often, the scorching heat devoured me by day, and the frost by night, while sleep fled from my eyes" (Genesis 31: 38 - 40).

In sum, constant vigilance and attention, fearless courage and proactive in the defense of the flock against wild animals, thieves and robbers, patient love for his flock to feed and tend them were the necessary characteristics of the shepherd of Israel. The picture of a shepherd of Israel is woven into the language and imagery of the Bible (Barclay 52 - 53). The shepherd is thus simultaneously a leader and a companion to his sheep. As a leader, he leads his flock to pasture and water as well as leads them to shelter. As a companion, he accompanies them all the while serving them. A shepherd of Israel, different from any other shepherd, is therefore a servant of the sheep who is also a leader. As such, the sheep rely and depend completely on the shepherd who is their leader and they follow him in search of pasture, water and for protection.

The shepherd Analogy and Leadership in Israel

The person and role of the shepherd of Judea was well known to the people. For this reason and by analogy, the children of Israel associated and related the imagery to those individuals saddled with leadership responsibilities such as judges (1 Chronicles 17: 6), priests, prophets and kings. Above all, the children of Israel, based on their experience, came to know and acknowledge God as their shepherd (Psalm 23).

Jacob's experience of God all through his life made him to acknowledge God as his shepherd in his words of blessing over Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh. "May the God in whose presence my fathers, Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd from my birth to this day, the angel who had delivered me from all harm, bless these boys. That in them my name be recalled, and the names of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac" (Genesis 48: 15 - 16). In Jacob's last testament and blessings upon his children, he conferred on Joseph the blessing of Divine shepherding (Genesis 49: 22 - 26), and declared and acknowledged God as the Mighty One of Jacob, the shepherd the Rock of Israel (Genesis 49: 24). At the time of the Exodus, God urged His people forward as sheep (Ps 95: 7), like a flock in the desert (Ps78: 52); as the shepherd who feeds his flocks, gathers the lambs in his arms, puts them on his breast, and leads to repose those that are with young (Is 40: 11), God continues thus to lead His people (Ps 80: 2) (Xavier Leon - Dufour, 541). Psalm 79: 11 has declared Israel as the sheep of the Lord's pasture, while Psalm 80 that follows, declared God as the shepherd of Israel. Psalm 23 seems to have a universal appeal of Divine shepherding. John S. Kselman considers the Psalm as a universal image emphasizing divine leadership and providence for his people. A provident shepherd who gives to his people lavish banquets (John S. Kselman *et al*, 530).

The same image and symbol have also been employed in the Old Testament to describe the caring relationship that should and sometimes exists between God's people and other human beings entrusted with the task of caring for them. Hence the Lord entrusts to his servants the sheep that He Himself leads to pasture (Ps 100: 3; 97: 13; 74: 1; Mi 7: 14); He guides them

by the hand of Moses (Ps 77: 21) lest God's community go without a shepherd. David was chosen to shepherd the Lord's people (2 Samuel 5: 2).

Pastoral leadership paradigm modeled according to biblical shepherding imagery, is characterized by qualities including but not limited to Constant vigilance and attention to the flock, fearless courage and proactive in the defense of the flock against wild animals, thieves and robbers, and finally, patient love for his flock, and readiness to provide, feed, water and tend them (Barclay 53). These are qualities or characteristics needed of African political leaders in general and Nigeria in particular in 21st century.

These are leadership qualities or characteristics that are needed in African socio - political and cultural contexts of the 21st century. Africa in general and Nigeria in particular need leaders who are fearless and courageous to confront the challenges of insecurity. Leaders who are constantly vigilant and pay attention to the plight of the people.

Based on the long historical experience of bad leadership, coupled with the nature of the Africa of the 21st century puts her in dire need of leadership paradigm shift. It is an Africa driven by a very high youth population in comparison to other parts of the world. Reshad Jaumally in *Leadership for the 21st Century – An African Vision* notes that “Current predictions posit that, by 2030, one in five people will be African. Already today half the continent is under the age of 20, ... this translates into a mighty workforce for the next several decades... (accessed 29/1/2024). This same youth force Reshad further notes, are digital natives because they have embraced technology. “The vast majority already have access to a mobile phone service... The fast - emerging digital ecosystem will multiply growth and innovation as access to smartphones and other devices enhance consumer information, networking, job - creating resources, and even financial inclusion”. For these and more, Reshad concludes: “Africa's future leaders will be bold, confident, agile and relentless in their pursuit of excellence, but they will also be ethical and value - driven, and see leadership as a form of selfless service. Our continent depends on their vision” (accessed 29/1/2024).

Common Grounds for Employing Pastoral Leadership in 21st Century Nigeria

Despite being polarized along religious divide in Nigeria, providence has made it that both Christianity and Islamic religions appreciate and encouraged the use and practice of pastoral leadership based on shepherding imagery in every aspect of life. For the Muslim Umma, Pastoral leadership was the Prophet's preferred model of leadership which is also recommended in all aspects of life. Ibn Kathir in his biography of the prophet Muhammad (PBH), cited in Imam al - nawawi's *Riyad Al - Saliheem*, recalled that the prophet, prior to his being called to prophetic duties, was a shepherd of sheep; and gave various lessons taught from the prophet's shepherding duties. Of interest is the following: “All of you are shepherds and each of you is responsible for your flock. An Imam is a shepherd and he is responsible for those in his care. A man is a shepherd in respect of his family and is responsible for those in his care. The woman is a shepherd in respect of her husband's house and is responsible for those in

her care. The servant is a shepherd in respect of his master's property and is responsible for what is in his care. All of you are shepherds and each of you is responsible for his flock” (web accessed 24/8/2023). Good leadership taking the example of the shepherd is implied in various aspects of the Qur'an and categorically stated in the Hadith. For instance, in Qur'an 33: 21, Allah says: “There has certainly been for you in the messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the last day and remembers Allah often”. This verse certainly is said to refer to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. He is given as a pattern and model of leadership for all who hope in Allah, those who hope in the last day and those who often remembers Allah (Imam al - nawawi web accessed 24/8/2023).

For Muslim Umma in Nigeria, it was this same pastoral leadership model pattern that ensured the success and prosperity in large parts of Northern Nigeria prior to the British conquest when large parts of Northern Nigeria were governed by Islamic legal system, the shariah, patterned according to the leadership model of the prophet. For according to Dr. Muhammed Tawfiq Ladan in *The Development and Application of Sharia in Northern Nigeria: Issues and Challenges*, “The emergence of Sokoto Caliphate in the 19th Century A. D. gave the Sharia a new outlook altogether in Nigeria; it became supreme in every sphere of life: Government, Economy, Foreign Policy, Administration of Justice and the organisation of society. The Sokoto Caliphate represents probably the most ambitious attempt in Islamic history, after the first two centuries of Islam, to organise state and society in accordance with the Prophetic model and in compliance with the precepts and provisions of the Sharia” (Web accessed 22/8/2023). He further reiterated that the treaty of non - interference in religion entered into between the emirs and the colonial administration was in recognition of the good leadership system guaranteed by the practice of the sharia in Northern Nigeria. This made the colonial administration adopt it in indirect rule of Northern Nigeria in which the Sharia administrative system was left intact except for expunging laws that were regarded as offensive. “Lugard soon recognised the folly of interfering with this system and entered into a treaty of non - interference in religion with the emirs. A blatant exception to the non - interference policy was to replace laws that Europeans considered repugnant with measures that seemed more civilised to refined European taste. The replaced provisions included slavery, amputation, stoning and retribution” (Web accessed 22/8/2023). For the Muslim Umma, it was thus the British conquest that destroyed good leadership in Nigeria according to this theory.

Pastoral leadership patterned after shepherding imagery, is highly cherished among Christian communities. By Christian communities here, it is meant any unit within a Christian assembly in its generic sense. Such units go by different names depending on different denominational affiliations including diocese, parish, outstation, assemblies, a hall, a prayer house and lots more. Even within these units, there are also other sub units such as the choir, the men, women and associations, and numerous sodalities.

Pastoral leadership is modeled after Jesus Christ the good shepherd who is willing to lay down his life for his flock (John

10). Since New Testament times, the church has employed the shepherding imagery and symbol to describe her inner nature and the caring relationship that exists between her and Christ. Hence, the church is a sheepfold with Christ the gate (John 10: 1 - 7); and the church is also the sheep with Christ the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep (John 10: 1 - 18). Peter after the resurrection of Jesus received the mission of feeding the entire Church (John 21: 16) as its shepherd based on his absolute love commitment to Jesus. After his resurrection Jesus inquired of Peter if he loved him. Peter also professed his commitment of love to Jesus. Peter too Jesus conferred the mission of pastoral leadership on Peter: "Feed my lambs, tend my sheep and feed my sheep" (John 21: 15 - 17). Other shepherds were also charged with the responsibility of watching over other churches: the elders, and the bishops (1 Peter 5: 1ff; Acts 20: 28). Like Peter therefore, anyone who occupies leadership position, he or she is called to feed the lambs, tend the sheep and feed the sheep that Jesus left behind (John 21: 15 - 19). To do this demands an attitude of humble service; thus, following after the example of Jesus the Lord, and teacher, the pastoral leader who washes the feet of others (John 13: 12 - 17) as servant leader. This makes the pastoral leader become self - sacrificing and self - emptying like Jesus (Phil 2: 5 - 8). Therefore, the pastoral leader is not engaged in leadership for material or political gains, but for self - emptying service.

Barclay sums up this understanding of the image and symbol of the shepherd employed in both the Old and New Testaments to describe the caring relationship that should exist between God's people and other human beings entrusted with the task of caring for them thus: "You understand why the shepherd of Judea sprang to the front in his people's history; why they gave his name to their king and made him symbol of providence; why Christ took him as the type of self - sacrifice" (53). The biblical shepherd and shepherding imagery encapsulate what pastoral leadership stands for. In contrast to leadership in secular society which is easily conceived of as a means of making one's authority or power felt by others, one who is a leader would, therefore, be perceived as one who holds enormous power, while others remain subordinate to him or her; Pastoral leadership, is patterned and modeled after the qualities of shepherding exhibited by shepherds in the land of Palestine. Among these qualities are: Constant vigilance and attention to the flock, fearless courage and proactive in the defense of the flock against wild animals, thieves and robbers, and finally, patient love for his flock, and readiness to provide, feed, water and tend them (Barclay 53). These are some of the qualities that endeared pastoral leadership to both Christian and Islamic religions.

2. Conclusion

In as much as the two great religions in the country, Islam and Christianity cherish pastoral leadership which is both the leadership model of the prophet Muhammad and Jesus Christ, pastoral leadership then becomes the common ground that should guide our participation in partisan politics. Nigeria needs credible leaders who are also shepherds

The experience of bad leadership suffered by both Muslims and Christians in Nigeria for decades should challenge the

electorate, both Christians and Muslims to seek and choose leaders who are also shepherds, regardless of ethnicity or religious and social affiliations. Both Muslims and Christians are duty bound to rescue Nigeria from the hands of bad leaders on the one hand, while on the other hand ensure that persons brought to leadership positions are those who have qualities of shepherding namely: Constant vigilance and attention to the flock, fearless courage and proactive in the defense of the flock against wild animals, thieves and robbers, and finally, patient love for his flock, and readiness to provide, feed, water and tend them. These are qualities or characteristics of pastoral leadership. They are qualities needed in every form of leadership. As such, they are qualities expected of our political leaders of the 21st century Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. The electorate should go for people with these qualities, while those elected should work hard to have such qualities. During electioneering processes, Christian and Islamic religious leaders are duty bound to educate their adherents on the need to choose leaders who are shepherds, and as good shepherds were willing to lay down their lives for Africans in general and Nigerians in particular regardless of creed or ethnic background.

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